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**STARK PRAISES OBAMA ADMINISTRATION FOR PROTECTING MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES**

Withdrawal of Bush Administration draft call letter allows CMS to implement greater protections for beneficiaries

WASHINGTON – House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee Chair Pete Stark (D-CA) praised the Obama Administration for rescinding a draft “call letter” by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) that lays out conditions for private insurers bidding to provide Medicare Advantage (MA) and Medicare Part D plans. The draft letter, issued earlier this month under the Bush Administration, failed to adopt key changes that would protect beneficiaries from discriminatory practices by insurers.

“This letter would have locked in another year of lax Bush-era guidelines for private insurers in Medicare, and I am pleased that the Obama Administration rescinded this letter,” said Rep. Stark. “In their first week on the job, the Obama Administration has shown they are serious about protecting the interests of Medicare beneficiaries, and ending giveaways to private insurers.”

CMS releases a “call letter” each year to inform insurers bidding to offer private Medicare plans about policies that will govern the coming plan year. The letter applies to both the Medicare Advantage (MA) and Part D Prescription Drug programs. This year’s release was the earliest ever.

To view Rep. Stark’s comments when the call letter was issued earlier this month, please [click here](#)